



Way of the World.



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THE
WAY OF THE WORLD.

A
COMEDY.

BY

Mr CONGREVE

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte.

Qui mœchis non vultis.——

HOR. Sat. 2. l. 1.

——Metuat doti deprensa.——

Ibid.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. ROBERTSON.

M,DCC,LXXIV.



P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr BETTERTON.

OF those few fools who with ill stars are curst,
 Sure scribbling fools, call'd Poets, fare the worst :
 For they're a set of fools which fortune makes,
 And after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
 With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,
 For fortune favours all her idiot-race :
 In her own nest the cuckow-eggs we find,
 O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling kind.
 No portion for her own she has to spare,
 So much she dotes on her adopted care.

Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
 Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win :
 But what unequal hazards do they run !
 Each time they write, they venture all they've won :
 The 'squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone. }
 This author, heretofore, has found your favour ;
 But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
 To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
 Shou'd grants, to poets made, admit resumption :
 And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
 If that be found a forfeited estate.

He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes ;
 But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains :
 Damn him the more ; have no commiseration
 For dulness on mature deliberation.
 He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene,
 Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain, }
 Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
 Some plot we think he has, and some new thought :
 Some humour too, no farce ; but that's a fault.
 Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect ;
 For, so reform'd a town who dares correct ?
 To please, this time, has been his sole pretence ;
 He'll not instruct, lest it shou'd give offence.
 Shou'd he by chance a knave or fool expose,
 That hurts none here, sure here are none of those.
 In short, our play shall (with your leave to shew it)
 Give you one instance of a passive poet,
 Who to your judgments yields all resignation ;
 To save, or damn, after your own discretion.

Dramatis Personæ.

FAINALL, in love with Mrs Marwood.

MIRABELL, in love with Mrs Millamant.

WITWOUD, } Followers of Mrs Millamant.

PETULANT, }

Sir WILFUL WITWOUD, Half-brother to Witwoud, and
Nephew to Lady Wishfort.

WAITWELL, Servant to Mirabell.

Lady WISHFORT, Enemy to Mirabell, for having falsely
pretended Love to her.

Mrs MILLAMANT, a fine Lady, Niece to Lady Wish-
fort, and loves Mirabell.

Mrs MARWOOD, Friend to Mr Fainall, and likes Mira-
bell.

Mrs FAINALL, Daughter to Lady Wishfort, and Wife
to Fainall, formerly Friend to Mirabell.

FOIBLE, Woman to Lady Wishfort.

MINCING, Woman to Mrs Millamant.

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

S C E N E, L O N D O N.

The Time equal to that of the Representation.

T H E

T H E
WAY OF THE WORLD.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

A Chocolate-house.

MIRABELL and FAINALL, rising from Cards. Betty waiting.

MIRABELL.

YOU are a fortunate man, Mr Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester, lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalu'd the loss of her reputation.

Mira. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Pr'ythee, why so reserv'd? Something has put you out of humour.

Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrell'd last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well receiv'd by her, while you were by.

A

Mira.

Mira. Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or, to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in——

Fain. O, there it is then—— She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason—— What, then my wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs Marwood and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whisper'd one another; then complain'd aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which reason I resolv'd not to stir. At last, the good old lady broke thro' her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and with a constrain'd smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened, and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mira. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such resignation.

Fain. What! tho' half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a humour, that I shou'd have been better pleas'd if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have 'em three times a-week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murder'd reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex shou'd be excepted; but somebody mov'd, that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mira. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation

detestation of mankind ; and, full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia ; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provok'd this separation : had you dissembled better, things might have continu'd in the state of nature.

Mira. I did as much as man cou'd, with any reasonable conscience ; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carry'd so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden ; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't if an old woman is to be flatter'd farther, unless a man should endeavour downright personally to debauch her ; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs Marwood.

Fain. What shou'd provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted ? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, till of late ; I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice ; and think that she who does not refuse 'em ev'ry thing, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell ; and tho' you may have cruelty enough, not to satisfy a lady's longing ; you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected ; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mira. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, friend, if you grow censorious, I must leave you ; — I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwoud—Bring me some chocolate.

Mira. Betty, what says your clock?

Bet. Turn'd of the last canonical hour, Sir.

Mira. How pertinently the jade answers me! Ha? almost one a clock! [*Looking on his watch.*] O, y'are come——

S C E N E II.

MIRABELL and Footman.

Mira. Well; is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Serv. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs wou'd have fail'd before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mira. So, so; you are sure they are married.

Serv. Married and bedded, Sir: I am witness.

Mira. Have you the certificate?

Serv. Here it is, Sir.

Mira. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till farther order: bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet ruffle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's pond, that I may see her before she returns to her lady: and, as you tender your ears, be secret.

S C E N E III.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY.

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleas'd.

Mira. Aye; I have been engag'd in a matter of some
fort

fort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engag'd, are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mira. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertain'd by Millamant?

Mira. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for to give her her due, she has wit.

Mira. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks, you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mira. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover, for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations, which in another woman wou'd be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once us'd me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; I study'd 'em and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily: to which end I so us'd myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me ev'ry hour less and less disturbance; 'till, in a few days, it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeas'd. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and, in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and, my life on't, you are your own man again.

Mira. Say you so?

Fain. I, I, I, have experience : I have a wife, and so forth.

S C E N E IV.

To them Messenger.

Mess. Is one Squire Witwoud here?

Bet. Yes ; what's your business ?

Mess. I have a letter for him, from his brother, Sir Willful, which I am charg'd to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend ——— That way.

S C E N E V.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY.

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Willful Witwoud ?

Fain. He is expected to day. Do you know him ?

Mira. I have seen him ; he promises to be an extraordinary person ; I think you have the honour to be related to him.

Fain. Yes ; he is half brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mira. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mira. For travel ! Why, the man that I mean is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that ; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mira. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis ; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstock'd.

Mira. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, any thing related ?

Fain.

11 THE WAY OF THE WORLD. ACT I.

Fain. Not at all; Whitwoud grows by the Knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mira. So, one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Willful is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the Monster in the tempest; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

Mira. Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approv'd; yet it is now and then to be endur'd. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptionous; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original!

S C E N E VI.

[To them] WITWOUD.

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall; Mirabell, pity me.

Mira. I do from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, Sir?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, Sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard;—A messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And, what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mira.

Mira. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

Wit. Aye, aye, my half brother. My half brother he is, no nearer, upon honour.

Mira. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, *le Drole!* Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him:—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say any thing in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I shou'd ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question, at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: But she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation wou'd go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mira. You had better step and ask his wife, if you wou'd be credibly inform'd.

Wit. Mirabell!

Mira. Aye.

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons;—— Gad I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mira. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No; but pr'ythee excuse me——my memory is such a memory.

Mira. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud;—for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money—my money it was——I have no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play;—for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: Since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mira. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and wou'd breed debates——Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering——faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of

of a small wit : nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him.——And, if he had any judgment in the world——he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be over nicely bred.

Wit. No, no ; hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own——No more breeding than a bum-bailie, that I grant you——'Tis pity ; the fellow has fire and life.

Mira. What, courage ?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that——I can't say as to that——Yes, faith, in controversy, he'll contradict any body.

Mira. Tho' twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he lov'd.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks ;——we have all our failings : you are too hard upon him ; you are, faith. Let me excuse him——I can defend most of his faults, except one or two : one he has, that's the truth on't ; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him——That indeed I could wish were otherwise.

Mira. Aye marry, what's that, Witwoud ?

Wit. O pardon me——expose the infirmities of my friend.——No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What, I warrant he's insincere, or 'tis some such trifle ?

Wit. No, no ; what if he be ? 'tis no matter for that ; his wit will excuse that : a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant ; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mira. May be you think him too positive ?

Wit. No, no ; his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That ! that's his happiness——his want of learning gives him the more opportunity to shew his natural parts.

Mira. He wants words.

Wit. Aye : but I like him for that now ; for his want of

of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion.

Wit. Truths ! Ha, ha, ha ! No, no ; since you will have it—I mean, he never speaks truth at all—that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

S C E N E VII.

To them Coachman.

Coach. Is Master Petulant here, mistress ?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach wou'd speak with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant ! three !

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolate, and a glass of cinnamon-water.

S C E N E VIII.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUD.

Wit. That shou'd be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

Mira. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Aye, aye, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting ; but to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coach hire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mira. How !

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more company here to take notice of him.—Why,
this

this is nothing to what he us'd to do:—Before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself——

Fain. Call for himself! What dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean! Why, he wou'd slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him—— As soon as your back was turn'd—— whip, he was gone; ——Then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and a mask; slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself, that is, I mean, call for himself; wait for himself; nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mira. I confess this is something extraordinary.—— I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a-coming; O, I ask his pardon.

S C E N E IX.

PETULANT, MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUND, Betty.

Bet. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come.—'Sbud, a man had as good be a profess'd midwife, as a profess'd whoremaster, at this rate; to be knock'd up and rais'd at all hours, and in all places. Pox on 'em; I won't come.——D'ye hear, tell 'em, I won't come.——Let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass.——I have a humour to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition! Condition's a dry'd fig, if I am not in humour.——By this hand, if they were your—a——a——your what-d'ye-call'm's themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

Mira. What-d'ye-call'm's! What are they, Witwound?

Wit. Empresses, my dear.——By your what-d'ye-call'm's, he means Sultana queens.

Pet. Aye; Roxana's.

Mira. Cry you mercy.

Fain. Witwound says they are——

Pet. What does he say they are?

Wit.

Wit. I; fine ladies, I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwoud.——Hark'e, by this light, his relations.——Two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old aunt, who loves caterwauling better than a conventicle.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off—Ha, ha, ha! Gad I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mira. No.

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Bet. They are gone, Sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough; let 'em trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandon'd the whole sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent pretension there yet? I shall cut your throat some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Aye, aye, let that pass.—There are other throats to be cut——

Mira. Meaning mine, Sir?

Pet. Not I—I mean no body—I know nothing—But there are uncles and nephews in the world——And they may be rivals—What then, all's one for that——

Mira. Now, hark'e, Petulant, come hither—Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain; I know nothing——Why, you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my Lady Withfort's?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why, that's enough—You and he are not friends; and if he shou'd marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha?

Mira. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why, then, say I know something.

Mira. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou sha't, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I, nothing I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash; snug's the word; I shrug and am silent.

Mira. O Raillery, Raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets——What, you're a Cabalist; I know you staid at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle, or me? tell me. If thou hadst but good-nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, wou'd shew as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense then, for the future?

Mira. Faith, I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that heaven may grant it thee in the mean-time.

Pet. Well, harkee.

Fain. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. Pshaw, pshaw, that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And, for my part—But that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I shou'd—Harkee—To tell you a secret, but let it go no farther—Between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had dy'd for her.

Wit. Umph——No——

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—Now, Demme, I shou'd hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We staid pretty late there last night; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town—and is between him and the best part of his estate; Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my Lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs

B

Millamant

Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell wou'd be in some sort unfortunately fobb'd, i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant shou'd hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman, and a kind of a humourist.

Mira. And this is the sum of what you cou'd collect last night.

Pet. The quintessence. May be Witwoud knows more. He stay'd longer——Besides, they never mind him; they say any thing before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

Pet. Ay, *tête à tête*; but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mira. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay; pox, I'm malicious, man. Now he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him——The fellow's well bred; he's what you call a——What-dee-call'em, a fine gentleman: But he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the park; the ladies talk'd of being there.

Mira. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother Sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his aunt's my Lady Withfort: pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O, rare Petulant; thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough. I'm in a humour to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves—Let not us be accessory to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet.

Pet. What, what? Then let 'em either shew their innocence, by not understanding what they hear, or else shew their discretion, by not hearing what they wou'd not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou then sense enough to know, that thou ought'st to be most asham'd thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand——I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill-breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment, in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill-manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

St James's Park.

Mrs FAINALL and Mrs MARWOOD.

Mrs FAINALL.

AY, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doating, or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: And when they cease to love (we ought to think at least) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and, as from such, fly from us.

Mrs Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love shou'd ever die before us; and that the man is often shou'd outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been lov'd. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life, because they once must leave us, is as preposterous, as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

B 2

Mrs Fain.

Mrs. Fain. 'Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free ; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex, of force, must entertain themselves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to doat like lovers ; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bless me, how have I been deceiv'd ! Why you profess a libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate mankind ?

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your husband ?

Mrs. Fain. Most transcendently ; ay, tho' I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you ; what I have said, has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it possible ? Dost thou hate those vipers men ?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em ; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon ; a Penthesilea.

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion farther.

Mrs. Fain. How ?

Mrs. Mar. Faith, by marrying ; if I could but find one that lov'd me very well, and would be thoroughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. Fain. You would not make him a cuckold ?

Mrs. Mar. No : but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fain.

Mrs Fain. Why, had you not as good do it?

Mrs Mar. O, if he should ever discover it, he wou'd then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I wou'd have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs Fain. Ingenious mischief! Wou'd thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs Mar. Wou'd I were.

Mrs Fain. You change colour.

Mrs Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs Fain. So do I; but I can hear him nam'd. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs Mar. I never lov'd him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs Fain. By the reason you give for your aversion, one wou'd think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs Mar. O, then it seems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the fudden.

Mrs Mar. What ails you?

Mrs Fain. My husband. Don't you see him? He turn'd short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

S C E N E II.

[To them] FAINALL and MIRABELL.

Mrs Mar. Ha, ha, ha; he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs Fain. For you; for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear.

Mrs Fain. My soul.

Fain. You don't look well to day, child.

Mrs Fain. D'ye think so?

Mira. He's the only man that does, Madam.

Mrs Fain. The only man that would tell me so, at least; and the only man from whom I cou'd hear it without mortification.

Fain. O my dear, I am satisfy'd of your tenderness;

I know you cannot resent any thing from me ; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs Fain. Mr Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night ; I would fain hear it out.

Mira. The persons concern'd in that affair, have yet a tolerable reputation.——I am afraid Mr Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs Fain. He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another, by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr Mirabell, and I dare promise, you will oblige us both.

S C E N E III.

FAINALL, MRS MARWOOD.

Fain. Excellent creature ! Well, sure if I shou'd live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mrs Mar. Ay ?

Fain. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes ; and what a wretch is he, who must survive his hopes ! nothing remains when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs Mar. Will you not follow 'em ?

Fain. Faith, I think not.

Mrs Mar. Pray let us ; I have a reason.

Fain. You are not jealous ?

Mrs Mar. Of whom ?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mrs Mar. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you, that I am tender of your honour ?

Fain. You wou'd intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

Mrs Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she wou'd be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs Mar. It may be you are deceiv'd.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs Mar.

Mrs Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceiv'd, Madam, and you are false.

Mrs Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know, I see through all your little arts—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembl'd your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another, have made you clash, till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession red'ning on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not——'Twas for my ease to oversee, and willfully neglect, the gross advances made him by my wife; that, by permitting her to be engag'd, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures, and take you offner to my arms in full security. But cou'd you think, because the nodding husband wou'd not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs Mar. And wherewithall can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity; with loving another; with love of Mirabell.

Mrs Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to shew an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: Your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs Mar. My obligations to my lady urg'd me: I had profess'd a friendship to her; and cou'd not see her easy nature so abus'd by that dissembler.

Fain. What, was it conscience then? Profess'd a friendship! O, the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mrs Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

Mrs Mar. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her, thro'

thro' strict fidelity to you, and sacrific'd my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And, have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit! To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious: And, do you reflect that guilt upon me, which shou'd lie buried in your bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once cou'd make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

Mrs Mar. 'Tis false; you urg'd it with deliberate malice——'Twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you lov'd, you cou'd forgive a jealousy: But you are stung to find you are discover'd.

Mrs Mar. It shall be all discover'd. You too shall be discover'd; be sure you shall. I can but be expos'd——If I do it myself, I shall prevent your baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs Mar. Disclose it to your wife; own what has past between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs Mar. By all my wrongs I'll do't——I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: With both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honour, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserv'd. Your fortune has been bestow'd as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shar'd. Yet, had not you been false, I had, ere this, repaid it——'Tis true——had you permitted Mirabell, with Millamant, to have stol'n their marriage, my Lady had been incens'd beyond all means of reconciliation: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended to my wife;——And wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence.

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprison'd, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow; a young widow; a handsome widow; and wou'd be again a widow; but that

that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution, to baffle thro' the ways of wedlock and this world. Will you yet be reconcil'd to truth and me?

Mrs Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent
—— I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs Mar. I loathe the name of love after such usage; and, next to the guilt with which you wou'd asperse me, I scorn you most.—Farewell.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs Mar. I care not——Let me go——Break my hands, do——I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I wou'd not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs Mar. Well, I have deserv'd it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs Mar. Poor dissembling! O that——Well, it is not yet——

Fain. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late——

Mrs Mar. No, it is not yet too late——I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs Mar. But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance——Come, I ask your pardon——No tears——I was to blame; I cou'd not love you and be easy in my doubts——Pray, forbear——I believe you; I'm convinc'd I've done you wrong; and any way, ev'ry way will make amends.——I'll hate my wife yet more; damn her, I'll part with her; rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, any where, to another world; I'll marry thee—Be pacify'd——'Sdeath, they come—hide your face—your tears——You have a mask; wear it a moment. This way; this way; be persuaded.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

MIRABELL and Mrs FAINALL.

Mrs Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs Fain. While I only hated my husband, I cou'd bear to see him; but since I have despis'd him, he's too offensive.

Mira. O, you shou'd hate with prudence.

Mrs Fain. Yes, for I have lov'd with indiscretion.

Mira. You shou'd have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs Fain. You have been the cause that I have lov'd without bounds; and wou'd you set limits to that aversion, of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mira. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals; an interested and professing friend; a false, and a designing lover. A better man ought not to have been sacrific'd to the occasion; a worse had not answer'd to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs Fain. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mira. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your pow'r to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mira. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs Fain. He is an humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mira. Care is taken for that—She is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and Foible. I wou'd not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, shou'd consent to marry my pretended

pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the Fox, stand upon terms ; so I made him sure before-hand.

Mrs Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the impostor betimes ; and release her, by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

Mira. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs Fain. She talk'd last night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mira. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your success ; for I believe my Lady will do any thing to get an husband ; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to any thing to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes ; I think the good Lady wou'd marry any thing that resembl'd a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs Fain. Female frailty ! But here's your mistress.

S C E N E V.

[To them] *Mrs MILLAMANT, WITWOOD, MINCING.*

Mira. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders — Ha, no ; I cry her mercy.

Mrs Fain. I see but one poor empty sculler ; and he tows her woman after him.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, Madam. — You us'd to have the *Beau monde* throng after you ; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle — I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Milla. O, I have deny'd myself airs to-day. I have walk'd as fast through the crowd —

Wit. As a favourite just disgraced ; and with as few followers.

Milla. Dear Mr Witwood, truce with your similitudes : For I am as sick of 'em —

Wit.

Wit. As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it, Madam, tho' 'tis against myself.

Milla. Yet, again! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do, Mrs Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Milla. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste? I have ask'd every living thing I met, for you; I have enquir'd after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes——No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mira. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit; a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs Fain. You were dress'd before I came abroad.

Milla. Ay, that's true——O, but then I had——Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?

Minc. O, Mem, your Laship staid to peruse a packet of letters.

Milla. O ay, letters——I had letters——I am persecuted with letters——I hate letters——No body knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em one does not know why——They serve one, to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, Madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Milla. Only with those in verse, Mr Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I try'd once, Mincing.

Minc. O, Mem, I shall never forget it.

Milla. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Minc. 'Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow Mem, and all to no purpose. But when your Laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as any thing, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so crips?

Minc. You're such a critic, Mr Witwoud.

Milla. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? O, ay, and went away——Now I think on't I'm angry?——No, now I think on't I'm pleas'd——For I believe, I believe I gave you some pain.

Mira. Does that please you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mira. You wou'd affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Milla. O, I ask your pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's power; and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—And then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be? Nay, 'tis true: You are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: For beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms—Your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flatter'd by it, and discover beauties in it: For that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Milla. O, the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now, you must know, they cou'd not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift!—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases: And then if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making of lovers, Madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Milla. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: They can but reflect what we look and say; vain, empty things, if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mira. Yet, to those two, vain, empty things, you owe two, the greatest pleasures of your life.

Milla. How so?

Mira. To your lover, you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves prais'd; and to an echo, the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting

ing rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait 'till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Milla. O, fiction! Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mira. Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to Mrs Fainall.*

Mrs Fain. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr Witwoud.

S C E N E VI.

MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, MINCING.

Mira. I wou'd beg a little private audience too— You had the tyranny to deny me last night; tho' you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concern'd my love.

Milla. You saw I was engag'd.

Mira. Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools: Things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they shou'd admire you; they are not capable: Or, if they were, it shou'd be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Milla. I please myself— Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mira. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Milla. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to *Assafœtida*.

Mira. You are not in a course of fools.

Milla. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom—you'll displease me—I think I must resolve after all, not to have you.—We sha'n't agree.

Mira. Not in our physic it may be.

Milla. And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I sha'n't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I'm resolv'd—I think—You may go—Ha, ha, ha! What wou'd you give that you cou'd help loving me?

Mira,

Mira. I wou'd give something that you did not know I cou'd not help it.

Milla. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mira. I say, that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

Milla. Sententious Mirabell! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Mira. You are merry, Madam; but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Milla. What, with that face? No; if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a love-sick face. Ha, ha, ha—Well, I won't laugh; don't be peevish, —Heigh ho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well! I see they are walking away.

Mira. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment—

Milla. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed—No.

Mira. But how you come to know it—

Milla. Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

S C E N E VII.

MIRABELL *alone.*

Mira. I have something more—Gone—Think of you! To think of a whirlwind, tho' 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquility of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling, than the heart of a man that is lodg'd in a woman.—O, here come my pair of turtles.—What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's day over with you yet?

C 2

S C E N E

S C E N E VIII.

[To him] WAITWELL, FOIBLE.

Mira. Sirrah, Waitwell; why, sure you think you were marry'd for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, Sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, Sir, I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, Sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you joy, Mrs Foible.

Foib. O-las, Sir, I'm so asham'd—I'm afraid my Lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, Sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, Sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foib. But I told my Lady as you instructed me, Sir, That I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your uncle; and that I wou'd put her Ladyship's picture in my pocket to shew him; which I'll be sure to say, has made him so enamour'd with her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her Ladyship's feet, and worship the original.

Mira. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, Sir; I think so.

Foib. You have seen Madam Millamant, Sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foib. I told her, Sir; because I did not know that you might find an opportunity, she had so much company last night.

Mira. Your diligence will merit more—in the mean time——

[Gives money.]

Foib. O, dear Sir, your humble servant.

Wait. Spouse.

Mira. Stand off, Sir; not a penny——Go on and prosper, Foible——The lease shall be made good, and the farm stock'd, if we succeed.

Foib. I don't question your generosity, Sir: And you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands,

ACT III. THE WAY OF THE WORLD. 33

mands, Sir, I'll be gone ; I'm sure my Lady is at her toilet, and can't dress 'till I come.——O, dear, I'm sure that [*Looking out.*] was Mrs Marwood that went by in a mask ; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my Lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, Sir. B'w'y Waitwell.

S C E N E IX.

MIRABELL, WAITWELL.

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment, she forgets herself.

Mira. Come, Sir, with you endeavour to forget yourself——and transform into Sir Rowland.

Wait. Why, Sir, it will be impossible I shou'd remember myself——Marry'd, knighted, and attended all in one day ! 'tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self ; and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither—for now I remember me, I'm marry'd, and can't be my own man again.

Ay, there's my grief ; that's the sad change of life ; To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Room in Lady Wishfort's House.

Lady WISHFORT at her Toilet, PEG waiting.

Lady WISHFORT.

MERCIFUL ! no news of Foible yet ?

Peg. No, Madam.

Lady. I have no more patience——If I have not fretted myself 'till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart ? An errant ash-colour, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs ! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red ? Did'st thou not hear me, Mopus ?

C 3

Peg.

Peg. The red Ratafia, does your Ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady. Ratafia, fool; no, fool, not the Ratafia, fool—Grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, idiot, complexion darling. Paint, paint, paint; dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wiles.

Peg. Lord, Madam, your Ladyship is so impatient—I cannot come at the paint, Madam; Mrs Foible has lock'd it up, and carry'd the key with her.

Lady. A pox take you both—Fetch me the cherry-brandy then.

S C E N E II.

Lady WISHFORT.

I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs Qualmsick the curate's wife, that's always breeding—Wench, come, come, wench; what art thou doing, sipping? tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

S C E N E III.

Lady WISHFORT, PEG *with a Bottle and China-cup.*

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady. A cup, save thee; and what a cup hast thou brought! Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill—So—again. See who that is—[*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle first. Here, here, under the table—What, would'st thou go with the bottle in thy hand like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has liv'd in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes the Asturian in Don Quixote. No Foible yet?

Peg. No, Madam; Mrs Marwood.

Lady. O, Marwood! let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

[To them] Mrs MARWOOD.

Mrs Mar. I'm surpris'd to find your Ladyship in *dish-
abille* at this time of day.

Lady. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs Mar. I saw her but now, as I came mask'd through the Park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady. With Mirabell! You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruin'd. Oh, my friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs Mar. O, Madam, you cannot suspect Mrs Foible's integrity.

Lady. O, he carries poison in his tongue that wou'd corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity? —Hark! I hear her—Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom—You'll pardon me, dear friend; I can make bold with you—There are books over the chimney—Quarles and Pryn, and the Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's works to entertain you.—Go, you thing, and send her in. [To Peg.]

S C E N E V.

Lady WISHFORT, FOIBLE.

Lady. O Foible, where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay 'tis your Ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promis'd. But a man so enamour'd—so transported! Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—Poor Sir Rowland, I say.

Lady.

Lady. The miniature has been counted like—But hast thou not betray'd me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell?—What hast thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me; has he got nothing out of thee?

Foib. So, the devil has been before-hand with me, what shall I say!—Alas, Madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? was I in fault? If you had heard how he us'd me, and all upon your Ladyship's account, I am sure you wou'd not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I cou'd have borne: but he had a fling at your Ladyship too; and then I cou'd not hold: but, i'faith, I gave him his own.

Lady. Me! What did the filthy fellow say?

Foib. O, Madam; 'tis a shame to say what he said—With his taunts and his sneers, tossing up his nose. Humph (says he) what, are you hatching some plot (says he) you are so early abroad, or catering (says he) ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant——Half-pay is but thin subsistence (says he)—Well, what pension does your Lady propose? Let me see (says he) what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and——

Lady. Ods my life, I'll have him, I'll have him murder'd. I'll have him poison'd. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer to have him poison'd in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's—immediately.

Foib. Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, Madam; starve him: marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. O, you wou'd bless yourself to hear what he said.

Lady. A villain; superannuated!

Foib. Humph (says he) I hear you are laying designs against me too (says he) and Mrs Millamant is to marry my uncle; (he does not suspect a word of your Ladyship) but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he) I'll hamper you for that (says he) and you and your old frippery too (says he) I'll handle you.—

Lady. Audacious villain! handle me! wou'd he durst——Frippery! old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouth'd fellow? I'll be marry'd to-morrow; I'll be contracted to-night.

Foib.

Foib. The sooner the better, Madam.

Lady. Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? When, Foible?

Foib. Incontinently, Madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood, with that impatience, in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your Ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags: A tatterdemalion. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Black Friars for brass farthings with an old mitten.

Lady. Ay, dear Foible, thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features, to receive Sir Rowland with any œconomy of face. This wretch has fretted me, that I am absolutely decay'd. Look, Foible.

Foib. Your Ladyship has frown'd a little too rashly, indeed, Madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady. Let me see the glass——Cracks, say'st thou? Why, I am errantly flea'd——I look like an old peel'd wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foib. I warrant you, Madam, a little art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, Madam.

Lady. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? for if he shou'd not be importunate——I shall never break decorums——I shall die with confusion, if I am forc'd to advance——Oh, no, I can never advance——I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither.——I won't give him despair——But a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little scorn becomes your Ladyship.

Lady.

Lady. Yes, but tenderneſs becomes me beſt——
A ſort of a dyingneſs——You ſee that picture has a ſort
of a——Ha, Foible? a ſwimmingneſs in the eyes——
Yes, I'll look ſo——My niece affects it: but ſhe wants
features. Is Sir Rowland handſome? Let my toilet be
remov'd—I'll dreſs above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here.
Is he handſome? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll
be ſurpris'd; be taken by ſurpriſe.

Foib. By ſtorm, Madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady. Is he! O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk
man. I ſhall ſave decorums if Sir Rowland importunes.
I have a mortal terror at the apprehenſion of offending a-
gainſt decorums. O, I'm glad he's a brisk man. Let
my things be remov'd, good Foible.

S C E N E VI.

Mrs FAINALL, FOIBLE.

Mrs Fain. O, Foible, I have been in a fright, leſt I
ſhou'd come too late. That devil Marwood ſaw you in
the park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will diſcover it to
my lady.

Foib. Diſcover what, Madam?

Mrs Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that ſtrange face.
I am privy to the whole deſign, and know that Waitwell,
to whom thou wert this morning marry'd, is to perſonate
Mirabell's uncle, and as ſuch, winning my lady, to in-
volve her into thoſe difficulties from which Mirabell only
muſt releaſe her, by his making his conditions to have my
couſin and her fortune left to her own diſpoſal.

Foib. O, dear Madam, I beg your pardon. It was not
my confidence in your Ladyſhip that was deficient; but
I thought the former good correſpondence between your
Ladyſhip and Mr Mirabell, might have hindered his com-
municating this ſecret.

Mrs Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foib. O, dear Madam, Mr Mirabell is ſuch a ſweet
winning gentleman——But your Ladyſhip is the pattern
of generoſity——Sweet lady, to be ſo good! Mr
Mirabell cannot chuſe but be grateful. I find your La-
dyſhip has his heart ſtill. Now, Madam, I can ſafely
tell your Ladyſhip our ſucceſs. Mrs Marwood had told
my

ACT III. THE WAY OF THE WORLD. 39

my lady ; but I warrant I manag'd myself. I turn'd it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr Mirabell rail'd at her ; I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow ; and my lady is so incens'd, that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says.——I warrant I work'd her up, that he may have her for asking for.

Mrs Fain. O rare Foible !

Foib. Madam, I beg your Ladyship to acquaint Mr Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him——besides, I believe, Madam, Marwood watches me.——She has a month's mind ; but I know Mr Mirabell can't abide her.——[*Calls*] John——remove my Lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My Lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs Fain. I'll go with you up the back-stairs, lest I should meet her.

S C E N E VII.

Mrs MARWOOD alone.

Mrs Mar. Indeed, Mrs Engine ; is it thus with you ? Are you become a go-between of this importance ? Yes, I shall watch you. My friend Fainall, have you carry'd it so swimmingly ? I thought there was something in it. Well, you have met with your match.——Madam Marwood has a month's mind ; but he can't abide her——'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity.——Here comes the good lady, panting ripe ; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chymist upon the day of projection.

S C E N E VIII.

[*To her*] Lady WISHFORT.

Lady. O, dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness——But my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs Mar. No apologies, dear Madam, I have been very well entertain'd.

Lady.

Lady. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I shou'd so forget myself — But I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do — [Calls] — Foible — I expect my nephew, Sir Wilfull, ev'ry moment too : — Why, Foible — He means to travel for improvement.

Mrs Mar. Methinks Sir Wilfull shou'd rather think of marrying, than travelling at his years. I hear he is turn'd of forty.

Lady. O, he's in less danger of being spoil'd by his travels — I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to chuse for himself.

Mrs Mar. Methinks Mrs Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady. I promise you I have thought on't — And since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word I'll propose it.

S C E N E IX.

[To them] FOIBLE.

Lady. Come, come, Foible — I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner — I must make haste.

Foib. Mr Witwoud and Mr Petulant are come to dine with your Ladyship.

Lady. O dear, I can't appear 'till I'm drefs'd. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em. I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me.

S C E N E X.

Mrs MARWOOD, Mrs MILLAMANT, MINCING.

Milla. Sure, never any thing was so unbred as that odious man — Marwood, your servant.

Mrs Mar. You have a colour, what's the matter?

Milla. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provok'd me into a flame — I have broke my fan — Mincing, lend me your's; is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs Mar. No. What has he done?

Milla. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talk'd — Nay, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted ev'ry thing that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrell'd.

Minc. I vow, Mem, I thought once they wou'd have fi't.

Milla. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of chusing one's acquaintance, as one does one's clothes.

Mrs Mar. If you wou'd but appear barefac'd now, and own Mirabell; you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it.

Milla. I'll take my death, Marwood; you are more censorious than a decay'd beauty, or a discarded toast; Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice.

S C E N E XI.

MILLAMANT, MARWOOD.

Milla. The town has found it! What has it found? That Mirabell loves me, is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discover'd it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discover'd it is a secret.

Mrs Mar. You are nettled.

Milla. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Milla. O silly! Ha, ha, ha. I cou'd laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me, has quite destroy'd his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoin'd it him to be so coy——If I had the vanity to think he wou'd obey me, I wou'd command him to shew more gallantry——'Tis hardly well bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha. Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha. Tho', I grant you, 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha.

Mrs Mar. Mr Mirabell and you both, may think it a
D thing

thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you—

Milla. O, dear, what? for it is the same thing, if I hear it——Ha, ha, ha.

Mrs Mar. That I detest him, hate him, Madam.

Milla. O, Madam, why so do I——And yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha. How can one forbear laughing to think of it——I am a sibyl, if I am not amaz'd to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer——and within a year or two as young——If you cou'd but stay for me, I shou'd overtake you——But that cannot be.——Well, that thought makes me melancholick.——Now I'll be sad.

Mrs Mar. Your merry note may be chang'd sooner than you think.

Milla. D'ye say so?

S C E N E XII.

[To them] PETULANT, WITWOUND.

Milla. Is your animosity compos'd, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, Madam; we have no animosity——We hit off a little wit now and then; but no animosity——The falling out of wits, is like the falling out of lovers——We agree in the main, like treble and base. Ha! Petulant?

Pet. Ay, in the main——But when I have a humour to contradict——

Wit. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What! I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battle-dores: For contradictions beget one another, like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black—if I have a humour to say, 'tis blue——Let that pass——All's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must——But it may——may.

Pet. Yes; it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive, it only may. That's a logical distinction now, Madam.

Mrs Mar.

Mrs Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs Mar. That's a sign indeed 'tis no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no; 'tis no enemy to any body, but them that have it.

Milla. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion: I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That, I confess, I wonder at too.

Milla. Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

Pet. Why shou'd a man be any farther from being marry'd, tho' he can't read, than he is from being hang'd. The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish-priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest, which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book — So all's one for that.

Milla. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company; I'll be gone.

S C E N E XIII.

Sir WILFULL WITWOUD in a riding Dress; *Mrs MARWOOD*, *PETULANT*, *WITWOUD*, *FOOTMAN*.

Wit. In the name of Bartholomew and his fair, what have we here?

Mrs Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I — Yes, I think it is he — I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

Foot. Sir, my Lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

Sir Wil. Dressing! What, 'tis but morning here, I warrant, with you in London; we shou'd count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire — Why, then, belike my aunt han't din'd yet — Ha, friend?

Foot. Your aunt, Sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, Sir; yes, my aunt, Sir, and your Lady, Sir; your lady is my aunt, Sir——Why, what, dost thou not know me, friend? Why, then, send some body hither that does. How long hast thou liv'd with thy Lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, Sir; longer than any body in the house, except my Lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why, then, belike thou dost not know thy Lady, if thou see'st her, ha, friend?

Foot. Why, truly, Sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dress'd. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee, try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, enquire her out, dost hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud is in the house.

Foot. I shall, Sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye; hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear; prithee, who are these gallants?

Foot. Really, Sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all.

S C E N E XIV.

Sir WILFULL WITWOUD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, Mrs. MARWOOD.

Sir Wil. Oons, this fellow knows less than a sterling; I don't think a'knows his own name.

Mrs Mar. Mr Witwoud, your brother is not behind-hand in forgetfulness——I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so——The devil take him that remembers first, I say.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

Mrs Mar. For shame, Mr Witwoud; why won't you speak to him?——And you, Sir?

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. And you, Sir.

Sir Wil. No offence, I hope. — [*Salutes Marwood.*

Mrs Mar. No, sure, Sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offence! Ha, ha, ha, to him; to him, Petulant; smoke him.

Pet.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, Sir; hem, hem. [Surveying him round.]

Sir Wil. Very likely, Sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offence, I hope, Sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Wil. May be not, Sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, Sir.

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, Sir: If you are not satisfy'd with the information of my boots, Sir, if you will step to the stable, you may enquire further of my horse, Sir.

Pet. Your horse, Sir! your horse is an ass, Sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of offence, Sir?

Mrs Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, Sir—S'life, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass, before they find one another out. You must not take any thing amiss from your friends, Sir. You are among your friends here, tho' it may be you don't know it—If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, Lady; I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud; so I write myself; no offence to any body, I hope; and nephew to the Lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, Sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not—Yea, by'r Lady, but 'tis—'Sheart, I know not whether 'tis or no—Yea, but 'tis by the Rekin. Brother Antony, what Tony! I'faith! What, dost thou not know me? By'r Lady, nor I thee, thou art so becravated, and so beperiwig'd—'Sheart, why dost not speak? Art thou o'erjoy'd?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! Why, yours, Sir. Your Servant again—'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that—And a—(puff) and flap dragon for your service, Sir: and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, Sir? an you be so cold and so courtly!

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, Sir, but there is, and much offence—A pox, is this your inns o'court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, Brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you, 'tis not

modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubbery brothers flabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of serjeants—'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not, indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this—By'r Lady, I conjectur'd you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a subpoena. I might expect this when you left off, Honour'd brother; and hoping you are in good health, and so forth—To begin with a rat me, Knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch—Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude—You cou'd write news before you were out of your time, when you liv'd with honest Pimple Nose the attorney of Furnival's Inn—You cou'd intreat to be remember'd then to your friends round the Rekin. We could have gazettes then, and Dawk's letter, and the weekly bill, till of late days.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? of the family of the Furnivals. Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay; but that was but for a while. Not long, not long: pshaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay; I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have serv'd your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs Mar. You intend to travel, Sir, as I'm inform'd.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, Madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, Sir; nor the weather-cock, your companion. I direct my discourse to the Lady, Sir; 'tis like my aunt may have told you, Madam—Yes, I have settl'd my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts.

parts. If an how that the peace holds, whereby that is taxes abate.

Mrs Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution—because, when I make it, I keep it. I don't stand, still I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't; but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs Mar. Here's an academy in town for that use.

Sir Wil. Is there? 'tis like there may.

Mrs Mar. No doubt, you will return very much improved.

Wil. Yes, refin'd like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

S C E N E XV.

[To them] *Lady WISHFORT and FAINALL.*

Lady. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.—Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr Petulant, your servant—Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink any thing after your journey, nephew, before you eat? dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—However, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart I was afraid you wou'd have been in the fashion too, and have remember'd to have forgot your relations. Here's your cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother, for fear of offence.

Lady. O, he's a railer, nephew—My cousin's a wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to chuse. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better. [Fain. and Mrs Marwood talk apart.

Sir Wil. Why then let him hold his tongue, in the mean time; and rail when that day comes.

S C E N E

S C E N E XVI.

[To them] MINCING.

Minc. Mem, I come to acquaint your La^dship, that dinner is impatient:

Sir Wil. Impatient! Why then, belike, it won't stay till I pull off my boots. Sweet heart, can you help me to a pair of slippers? — My man's with his horses, I warrant.

Lady. Fie, fie; nephew, you wou'd not pull off your boots here—go down into the hall—Dinner shall stay for you—My nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, Madam—Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs Mar. I'll follow you, Madam—before Sir Wil. fall is ready.

S C E N E XVII.

MARWOOD, FAINALL.

Fain. Why, then, Foible's a bawd; an errant, rank, match-making bawd. And I, it seems, I am a husband, a rank-husband; and my wife a very errant, rank-wife, —all in the way of the world: 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! Sure I was born with budding antlers, like a young satyr, or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath, to be out-witted, to be out-jilted—Out-matrimony'd——If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat——but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be out-strip'd by my wife——'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs Mar. Then shake it off; you have often wish'd for an opportunity to part;—and now you have it. But first prevent their plot——the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Damn him, that had been mine——had you not made that fond discovery——That had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my horns; by that increase of fortune, I cou'd have worn 'em tipt with gold, tho' my forehead had been furnish'd like a deputy lieutenant's hall.

Mrs Mar.

Mrs Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected; why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mrs Mar. Discover to my Lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her——My Lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My Lady will be enrag'd beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all, at that conjecture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she shou'd flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith, this has an appearance.

Mrs Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my Lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull; that may be an obstacle.

Fain. O, for that matter, leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane: After dinner, I'll set his hand in.——Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs Mar. I will contrive a letter which shall be deliver'd to my Lady at the time when that rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand——for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I wou'd not have Foible provok'd, if I could help it——because, you know, she knows some passages——Nay, I expect all will come out——But let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discover'd.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst——I'll turn my wife to grass—I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate, which I wheedled out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs Mar. I hope you are convinc'd that I hate Mirabell now: you'll be no more jealous?

Fain. Jealous, no——by this kiss——let husbands be jealous; but let the lover still believe: I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of
'em,

'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must, or pain, or shame, endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE *Continues.*

Lady WISHFORT and FOIBLE.

LADY.

IS Sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foib. Yes, Madam. I have put wax lights in the sconces; and plac'd the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady. Have you pulvill'd the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

Foib. Yes, Madam.

Lady. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

Foib. Most killing well, Madam.

Lady. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?—

No, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—No, that will be too sudden—I'll lie, ay, I'll lie down—

I'll receive him in my little dressing-room, there's a couch—Yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow; with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—Yes—and then, as soon as he appears, start, ay, start, and be surpris'd, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder—yes—O, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion—

It shews the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and recomposing airs beyond comparison. Hark! there's a coach.

Foib.

Foib. 'Tis he, Madam.

Lady. O dear, has my nephew made his addressee to Millamant? I order'd him.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, Madam, in the parlour.

Lady. Ods my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go. When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland.

SCENE II.

Mrs MILLAMANT, Mrs FAINALL, FOIBLE.

Foib. Madam, I stay'd here, to tell your Ladyship that Mr Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you. Tho' my Lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Milla. No——What wou'd the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and wou'd amuse myself—bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be curs'd.

[Repeating and walking about.

That's hard!

Mrs Fain. You are very fond of Sir Jack Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Milla. He? Ay, and filthy verses——So I am.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is coming, Madam. Shall I send Mr Mirabell away?

Milla. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away——Or send him hither—just as you will, dear Foible—I think I'll see him—Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come.

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train.

[Repeating.

Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull——Thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool; thou art marry'd, and hast patience——I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs Fain. I am oblig'd to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

[To them] Sir WILFULL.

Mrs Fain. O, Sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my aunt will have it so—I would gladly have been encourag'd with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I'm acquainted; [*This while Millamant walks about repeating to herself.*]—But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance—So, for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave—If so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company——

Mrs Fain. O fie, Sir Wilfull. What, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted! no, that's not it; it is not so much for that—for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient 'till further acquaintance, that's all——your servant.

Mrs Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, If I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door.

S C E N E IV.

Sir WILFULL, MILLAMANT.

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves—What d'ye do? 'Sheart a'has lock'd the door indeed, I think—Nay, cousin Fainall, open the door——
—Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this!—Nay, now a'has seen me too—Cousin, I made bold to pass thro' as it were—I think this door's enchanted——

Milla. [*Repeating.*]

I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
Prets me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anan? Cousin, your servant.

Milla. —*That foolish trifles of a heart*—Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Yes—your servant. No offence I hope, cousin.

Milla.

Milla. [*Repeating.*]

I swear it will do its part,

Tho' thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anan? Suckling? No such Suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank heaven I'm no minor.

Milla. Ah rustic, ruder than Gothic.

Sir Wil. Well, well; I shall understand your *Lingo* one of these days, cousin; in the mean while I must answer in plain English.

Milla. Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin——Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were dispos'd to fetch a walk this evening. If so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Milla. A walk? What then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing——Only for the walk's sake; that's all——

Milla. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion. I loathe the country and every thing that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may——Here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like, that must be confess'd, indeed——

Milla. *Ah l'etourdie!* I hate the town too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much——Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country——'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Milla. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may——You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin——'Tis like, when I have an opportunity to be more private——I may break my mind in some measure——I conjecture you partly guess——However, that's as time shall try——But spare to speak, and spare to speed, as they say.

Milla. If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little business.——

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, cousin: Yes, yes; all a case——When you're dispos'd, when you're dispos'd. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now.

E

All's

All's one for that—Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold as they say—Cousin, your servant—I think this door's lock'd.

Milla. You may go this way, Sir.

Sir Wil. Your servant; then, with your leave, I'll return to my company.

Milla. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.

S C E N E V.

MILLAMANT, MIRABELL.

Mira.—Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.

Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contriv'd, to signify that here the chace must end, and my pursuit be crown'd; for you can fly no farther?—

Milla. Vanity! No——I'll fly and be follow'd to the last moment, tho' I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you shou'd solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the gate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the last?

Milla. O, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduc'd to an inglorious ease; and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation. O, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband, has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mira. Wou'd you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other 'till after grace?

Milla. Ah! don't be impertinent——My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h adieu—My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *Douceurs Sommeils du Martio* adieu.

I can't

I can't doubt, 'tis more than impossible——Positively, Mirrabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

Mira. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Milla. Ay! idle creature, get up when you will——And, d'ye hear, I won't be call'd names after I'm marry'd; positively I won't be call'd names.

Mira. Names!

Milla. Ay; as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet-heart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that——Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Faddle and Sir Francis: Nor go to Hyde Park together, the first Sunday, in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: Let us be as strange as if we had been marry'd a great while; and as well-bred as if we were not marry'd at all.

Mira. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

Milla. Trifles—As liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and chuse conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me, to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing-room, when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea table, which you must never presume to approach, without first asking leave. And, lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscrib'd, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may, by degrees, dwindle into a wife.

Mira. Your bill of fare is something advanc'd in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions——That when you are dwindle'd into a wife, I

very dear

may not be beyond measure enlarg'd into a husband.

Milla. You have free leave; propose your utmost; speak and spare not.

Mira. I thank you. *Imprimis* then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex: No decoy-duck to wheedle you, a fop scrambling to the play in a mask——Then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out——And rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

Milla. Detestable *imprimis*! I go to the play in a mask!

Mira. Item, I article that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall: And while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oil'd skins, and I know not what——Hogs bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. *Item,* I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and penny-worths of muslin, china, fans, atlasses, &c.——*Item,* when you shall be breeding——

Milla. Ah! name it not.

Mira. Which may be presum'd, with a blessing on our endeavours——

Milla. Odious endeavours!

Mira. I denounce against all straight lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf; and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked-billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea table, I submit——But with proviso, that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple tea table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authoriz'd tea table talk——Such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth——But that on no account you encroach upon the mens prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea table, as Orange brandy, all Anniseed, Cinna-mon, Citron and Barbadoes waters, together with Ratafia, and the most noble spirit of Clary.——But for Cowslip

wine,

finish

wine, Poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow.—
These proviso's admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Milla. O horrid proviso's! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows! odious men! I hate your odious proviso's.

Mira. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? and here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

S C E N E VI.

[*To them*] *Mrs FAINALL.*

Milla. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him; what shou'd you do?

Milla. Well, then—I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—Well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs Fain. Fie, fie; have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Milla. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kiss'd, nor I won't be thank'd—Here, kiss my hand tho'—So, hold your tongue now; don't say a word.

Mrs Fain. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience:—You have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and, in my conscience, if she shou'd see you, wou'd fall into fits, and may be not recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your extasies for another occasion, and slip down the back stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Milla. Ay, ay, go. In the mean time, I'll suppose you have said something to please me.

Mira. I am all obedience.

S C E N E VII.

MILLAMANT, *Mrs FAINALL.*

Mrs Fain. Yonder Sir Wilfull's drunk, and so noisy that my mother has been forc'd to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking——What they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Milla. Well, if Mirabell shou'd not make a good husband, I am a lost thing;—for I find I love him violently.

Mrs Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.——If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

Milla. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

S C E N E VIII.

[*To them* WITWOUND *from drinking.*]

Mrs Fain. So, is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em! I cou'd stay no longer——I have laugh'd like ten christnings—I am tipsy with laughing—If I had staid any longer I shou'd have burst—I must have been let out and piec'd in the sides like an unsiz'd camblet——Yes, yes, the fray is compos'd; my Lady came in like a *noli prosequi*, and stopp'd the proceedings.

Milla. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They cou'd neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell a spitting at one another like two roasting apples.

S C E N E IX.

[*To them*] PETULANT *drunk.*

Wit. Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad, my head begins to whim it about——Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet.

Pet. Look you, Mrs Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—Pass on, or pass off—that's all.

Wit. Thou hast utter'd volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Pet. Witwoud—you are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—Thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of short-hand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass; and Baldwin yonder, thy half brother, is the rest—A *gemini* of asses split wou'd make just four of you.

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off—I'll kiss no more males—I have kiss'd your twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation, 'till he (*hiccup*) rises upon my stomach like a radish.

Milla. Eh! filthy creature—What was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel—There might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between 'em to have express'd provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Milla. Me!

Pet. If I have a humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premisses—If you are not handsome, what then; if I have a humour to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do; wrap thyself up like a wood-louse, and dream revenge—And, hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge—I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider—go flea dogs and read romances—I'll go to bed to my maid.

Mrs Fain. He's horridly drunk—How came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight—Your husband's advice, but he sneak'd off.

SCENE

S C E N E X.

*Sir WILFULL drunk, Lady WISFORT, WITWOUD,
MILLAMANT, Mrs FAINALL.*

Lady. Out upon't, out upon't, at years of discretion,
and comport yourself at this rantipole rate.

Sir Wil. No offence, aunt.

Lady. Offence! As I'm a person, I'm asham'd of you
—— Fough! how you stink of wine! d'ye think my
niece will ever endure such a Borachio! you're an abso-
lute Borachio.

Sir Wil. Borachio!

Lady. At a time when you shou'd commence an amour,
and put your best foot foremost——

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make
a bill——Give me more drink, and take my purse.
But if you wou'd have me marry my cousin——Say the
word, and I'll do't——Wilfull will do't, that's the word
——Wilfull will do't, that's my crest——my motto I
have forgot.

Lady. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin——but
'tis with drinking your health——O' my word you are
oblig'd to him.

Sir Wil. *In vino veritas*, aunt:——If I drink your
health to-day, cousin——I am a Borachio. But if you
have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the
piper; Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's
have t'other round——Tony! Ods heart, where's Tony?
——Tony's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper,
and that's a fault.

Sings,

*We'll drink and we'll never have done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk ev'ry night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.*

A match or no match, cousin, with the hard name——
Aunt, Wilfull will do't. If she has her maidenhead, let
her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own coun-
sel in the mean time, and cry out at the nine months end.

Milla.

Exeunt

Milla. Your pardon, Madam, I can stay no longer—
Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells!
I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

S C E N E XI.

*Lady WISHFORT, Sir WILFULL WITWOUD, Mr
WITWOUD, FOIBLE.*

Lady. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and
his family. Beastly creature; I know not what to do with
him. [Foible *whispers* Lady Wishfort.

Lady. Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall
I do with this beastly Tumbril?—Go, lie down and
sleep, you sot,—or as I'm a person, I'll have you bastina-
do'd with broom-sticks. Call up the wenches with
broom-sticks.

Sir Wil. A-hey! wenches; where are the wenches?

Lady. Dear cousin Witwoud, get him away, and you
will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of mo-
ment that invades me with some precipitation——You
will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, Knight——Pox on him, I don't know
what to say to him—Will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag,
Sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay,
ay; come, will you march, my Salophian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my
Anthony, my T Antony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tan-
tony, and I'll be thy pig.

—And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Lady. This will never do. It will never make a match:
—At least before he has been abroad.

S C E N E XII.

*Lady WISHFORT, WAITWELL disguis'd as for Sir
ROWLAND.*

Lady. Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with con-
fusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness—I have
more pardons to ask than the Pope distributes in the year
of jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near
an

an alliance—we may unbend the severity of decorum—and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, Madam, is the effect of my transport;—and, 'till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantaliz'd on the rack; and do but hang, Madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady. You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage—

Wait. For decency of funeral, Madam. The delay will break my heart—or, if that shou'd fail, I shall be poison'd. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me—and I wou'd willingly starve him before I die—I wou'd gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction——That wou'd be some comfort to me, if I cou'd but live so long as to be reveng'd on that unnatural viper.

Lady. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly, I wou'd contribute much, both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge——Not that I respect myself; tho' he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady. O, Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardours and the extasies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! Oh, no memory can register.

Wait. What, my rival! Is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

Lady. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland; starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms——He shall starve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink, like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way——You are no novice in the labyrinth of love——You have the clue——But, as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding, to any sinister appetite——

tite—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials——

Wait. Far be it from me——

Lady. If you do, I protest I must recede——or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums; but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance——

Wait. I esteem it so——

Lady. Or else you wrong my condescension——

Wait. I do not, I do not——

Lady. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient——

Wait. Dear Madam, no. You are all camphire and frankincense, all chastity and odour.

Lady. Or that——

S C E N E XIII.

[To them FOIBLE.

Foib. Madam, there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

S C E N E XIV.

WAITWELL, FOIBLE.

Wait. Fie, fie!——What a slavery have I undergone? Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

Foib. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady?

Wait. O, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't——I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials——this eight and forty hours——By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days——than act Sir Rowland 'till this time to-morrow.

S C E N E

an alliance—we may unbend the severity of decorum—and dispense with a little ceremony.

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Wait. What, my rival! Is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

Lady. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland; starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms——He shall starve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink, like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way——You are no novice in the labyrinth of love——You have the clue——But, as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding, to any sinister appetite——

ACT IV. THE WAY OF THE WORLD. 39

tite—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials——

Wait. Far be it from me——

Lady. If you do, I protest I must recede——or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums; but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance——

Wait. I esteem it so——

Lady. Or else you wrong my condescension——

Wait. I do not, I do not——

Lady. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient——

Wait. Dear Madam, no. You are all camphire and frankincense, all chastity and odour,

Lady. Or that——

S C E N E XIII.

[To them FOIBLE.

Foib. Madam, there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

S C E N E XIV.

WAITWELL, FOIBLE.

Wait. Fie, fie!——What a slavery have I undergone? Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

Foib. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady?

Wait. O, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't——I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials——this eight and forty hours——By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days——than act Sir Rowland 'till this time to-morrow.

S C E N E

S C E N E XV.

[To them] LADY with a Letter.

Lady. Now, with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter—I would open it in your presence; because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy, I would burn it—speak, if it does—but you may see the superscription is like a woman's hand.

Foib. By heav'n! Mrs Marwood's, I know it—my heart akes—Get it from her—
[To him.]

Wait. A woman's hand? No, Madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's some body whose throat must be cut.

Lady. Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication—You shall see it—we'll open it together——look you here.

Reads—Madam, tho' unknown to you, [Look you there, 'tis from no body that I know.]—*I have that honour for your character, that I think myself oblig'd to let you know you are abus'd. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland, is a cheat and a rascal——*

Oh heav'ns! what's this?

Foib. Unfortunate, all's ruin'd.

Wait. How, how; let me see, let me see—reading, *A rascal, and disguis'd and suborn'd for that imposture—*
O villany! O villany!—*by the contrivance of——*

Lady. I shall faint, I shall die, oh!

Foib. Say 'tis your nephew's hand—Quickly, his plot, swear, swear it.—
[To him.]

Wait. Here's a villain! Madam, don't you perceive it? don't you see it?

Lady. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand—A woman's hand! The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him——

Foib. O treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing!

ACT IV. THE WAY OF THE WORLD. 65

Wait. Sure ! Am I here ? Do I live ? Do I love this pearl of India ? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

Lady. How !

Foib. O what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture ! This was the business that brought Mr Mirabell disguis'd to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me, and would have hid his face.

Lady. How, how ! — I heard the villain was in the house, indeed : and, now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foib. Then, then Madam, Mr Mirabell waited for her in her chamber ; but I would not tell your Ladyship to discompose you, when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short !

Foib. No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law ! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause — My Lady shall be satisfy'd of my truth and innocence, tho' it cost me my life.

Lady. No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight ; if you shou'd be kill'd, I must never shew my face ; or hang'd — I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait. I am charm'd, Madam ; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you ; I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady. Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort ; bring the black box.

Wait. And, may I presume to bring a contract to be sign'd this night ? May I hope so far ?

Lady. Bring what you will ; but come alive ; pray, come alive.

Wait. Dead or alive I'll come — and married we will be in spite of treachery ; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandon'd nephew. Come, my buxom widow :

Ere long you shall substantial proof receive
That I'm an arrant knight —

Foib. Or arrant knave.

F

A C T

ACT V. SCENE I.

[SCENE *continues.*]*Lady WISHORT and FOIBLE.**Lady WISHFORT.*

OUT of my house; out of my house, thou viper; thou serpent, that I have foster'd; thou bosom traitress, that I rais'd from nothing—Begone, begone, begone; go, go; starve again; do, do.

Foib. Dear Madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lady. Away; out, out; go set up for yourself again—do, drive a trade, do, with your three-penny worth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread; an old gnaw'd mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle. Go, go, drive a trade—These were your commodities, you treacherous trull; this was the merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my house, plac'd you next myself, and made you governant of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feather'd your nest?

Foib. No, no, dear Madam. Do but hear me; have but a moment's patience—I'll confess all. Mr Mirabell seduc'd me; I am not the first that he has wheedl'd with his dissembling tongue; your Ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him; then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O, Madam, if you knew but what he promis'd me, and how he assur'd me your Ladyship should come to no damage—Or else the wealth of the Indies should not have brib'd me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a Lady as you have been to me.

Lady. No damage! What, to betray me; to marry me to a cast serving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decay'd pimp? No damage! O thou frontless impudence!

Foib. Pray, do but hear me, Madam; he could not marry your Ladyship, Madam—No, indeed; his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was marry'd to me first, to secure your Ladyship. He could not have bedded

bedded your Ladyship; for if he had consummated with your Ladyship, he must have run the risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy——Yes, indeed, I enquir'd of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.

Lady. What, then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems—while you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you? what, have you made a passive bawd of me?—this exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews? I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already: You shall coo in the same cage, if there be constable or warrant in the parish.

Foib. O that ever I was born. O that I was ever marry'd—a bride, ay; I shall be a Bridewell bride. Oh!

S C E N E II.

Mrs FAINALL, FOIBLE.

Mrs Fain. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foib. O Madam, my Lady's gone for a constable; I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp; poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs Fain. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foib. Yes; I know it, Madam; she was in my Lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the mean time Mrs Marwood declar'd all to my Lady.

Mrs Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter?——My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, tho' she has told my husband.

Foib. Yes, Madam; but my lady did not see that part: We stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr Fainall of your Ladyship then?

Mrs Fain. Ay, all's out; my affair with Mirabell; e-

very thing discover'd. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foib. Indeed, Madam, and so 'tis a comfort if you knew all——he has been even with your Ladyship; which I cou'd have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will: I had rather bring friends together, than set 'em at a distance. But Mrs Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs Fain. Say'st thou so, Foible? canst thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my oath of it, Madam, so can Mrs Mincing; we have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that pass'd in our chamber one evening, when you were at Hyde Park;——and we were thought to have gone a walking; but we went up unawares——though we were sworn to secrecy too; Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it: But it was but a book of poems——So long as it was not a Bible oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I cou'd wish. Now, Mincing?

S C E N E III.

[To them] MINCING.

Minc. My Lady wou'd speak with Mrs Foible, Mem. Mr Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs Foible, and wou'd have you hide yourself in my Lady's closet, till my old Lady's anger is abated. O, my old Lady is in a perilous passion, at something Mr Fainall has said; he swears, and my old Lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, Mem, how that he'll have my Lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorc'd.

Mrs Fain. Does your Lady or Mirabell know that?

Minc. Yes, Mem, they have sent me to see if Sir Willfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My Lady is resolv'd to have him I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pound. O, come Mrs Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing, that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foib.

Foib. Yes, yes, Madam.

Minc. O yes, Mem ; I'll vouch any thing for your Ladyship's service, be what it will.

S C E N E IV.

Mrs FAINALL, Lady WISHFORT, MARWOOD.

Lady. O, my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have receiv'd from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell ; to you I owe the detection of the impostor Sir Rowland. And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to desarts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

Mrs Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, Madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concern'd in the treaty.

Lady. O daughter, daughter ; is it possible thou should'st be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh ; and, as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a mould but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

Mrs Fain. I don't understand your Ladyship.

Lady. Not understand ! Why, have you not been naught ! Have you not been sophisticated? Not understand? Here I am ruin'd to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough—

Mrs Fain. I'm wrong'd and abus'd, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there ; ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

Mrs Mar. My friend, Mrs Fainall? Your husband my friend, what do you mean?

Mrs Fain. I know what I mean, Madam, and so do you; and so shall the world, at a time convenient.

Mrs Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, Madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal, to serve your Ladyship and family, should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, Madam, if I meddle no more with an affair, in which I am not personally concern'd.

Lady. O, dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns——You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature; she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish——O, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity——No, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs Fain. I tell you, Madam, you're abus'd—Stick to you! ay, like a leech, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions. I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial.

S C E N E V.

Lady WISFORT, MARWOOD.

Lady. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wrong'd after all, ha? I don't know what to think—O, dear friend, I can't believe it; no, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs Mar. Prove it, Madam! what, and have your name prostituted in a public court; your's and your daughter's reputation worry'd at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers? to be usher'd in with an O Yes of scandal.

Lady. O, 'tis very hard!

Mrs Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must, after this, be consign'd by the short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferr'd to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounderman's: and this you must hear 'till you are stunn'd; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady.

Lady. O, 'tis insupportable. No, no, dear friend ; make it up, make it up ; ay, ay. I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—any thing ; every thing for composition.

Mrs Mar. Nay, Madam, I advise nothing. I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniencies which, perhaps, you have overseen. Here comes Mr Fainall ; if he will be satisfied to huddle all up in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

S C E N E VI.

FAINALL, *Lady* WISHFORT, *Mrs* MARWOOD.

Lady. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood : No, no ; I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, Madam ; I have suffer'd myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady your friend ; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life ; on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady. Never to marry ?

Fain. No more Sir Rowlands—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my Lady will consent to, without difficulty ; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, Madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude, we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady. Ay, that's true ; but in case of necessity ; as of health, or some such emergency——

Fain. O, if you are prescrib'd marriage, you shall be consider'd ; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already ; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady. This is most inhumanly savage.

Fain. Lastly, I will be endow'd, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pound, which is the moiety of Mrs Millamant's fortune in your possession ; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and

testament

testament of your deceas'd husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience, in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge; and, by refusing the offer'd match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady. My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his address.

Fain. I come to make demands——I'll hear no objection.

Lady. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand, till more sufficient deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while, I will go for the said instrument, and, 'till my return, you may balance this matter in your own discretion.

S C E N E VII.

Lady WISHSORT, Mrs MARWOOD.

Lady. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs Mar. 'Tis severe, indeed, Madam, that you shou'd smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady. 'Twas against my consent that she marry'd this barbarian; but she wou'd have him, tho' her year was not out——Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, wou'd not have carry'd it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is match'd now with a witness.——I——shall be mad; dear friend, is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel rate?——Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

S C E N E VIII.

[*To them*] MILLAMANT, Sir WILFULL.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady. Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt: I know you not.

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say,——'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What wou'd you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt——and if I did, I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can

can a man say fairer? If I have broke any thing I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you, I'm willing to marry my cousin. So, pray, let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady. How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

Milla. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, Madam, and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you are misinform'd, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and, for the contract that pass'd between Mirabell and me, I have oblig'd him to make a resignation of it in your Ladyship's presence.—He is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady. Well, I'll swear I am something reviv'd at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him I fear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

Milla. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady. Are you sure it will be the last time!—If I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Milla. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt; let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers and fellow-travellers.—We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I—He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over seas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company.—'Sheart, I'll call him in——an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him.

[Goes to the door and hems.]

Mrs Mar. This is precious fooling, if it wou'd pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady. O, dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mrs Mar. Not far, Madam; I'll return immediately.

S C E N E

S C E N E IX.

Lady WISHFORT, *MILLAMANT*, *Sir WILFULL*, *MIRABELL*.

Sir Wil. Look up man ; I'll stand by you ; 'sbud, an she do frown, she can't kill you ;——besides——harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own? 'Sheart, an she shou'd, her forehead wou'd wrinkle like the coat of a cream cheese ; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mira. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offer'd to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy——Ah, Madam, I am going where I never shall behold you more——

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveller!——You shall go by yourself then.

Mira. Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten.——I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt——Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt ; why you must an you are a Christian.

Mira. At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear ; that, to your cruel indignation I have offer'd up this beauty, and, with her, my peace and quiet ; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, wou'd I may never be o' the quorum——An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again,——I wou'd I might never take shipping——Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that ; my contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry ;——one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis dissolv'd.

Lady. Well, nephew, upon your account——Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue——Well, Sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request——I will endeavour what I can to forget——but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mira. It is in writing, and with papers of concern ; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

S C E N E

S C E N E X.

[To them] *Mr FAINALL, Mrs MARWOOD.*

Fain. Your date of deliberation, Madam, is expir'd. Here is the instrument; are you prepar'd to sign?

Lady. If I were prepar'd, I am not empower'd. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having match'd herself, by my direction, to Sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me—tho' 'tis impos'd upon you, Madam.

Milla. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mira. And, Sir, I have resign'd my pretensions.

Sir Wil. And, Sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, Sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, Sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, Sir. It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus, or a taylor's measure; therefore, withdraw your instrument, Sir, or by'r Lady I shall draw mine.

Lady. Hold, nephew, hold.

Milla. Good Sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

Fain. Indeed? are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there. But I'm prepar'd for you; and insist upon the first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use; as, pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant—I suppose, Madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right.—You may draw your fox if you please, Sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else: For here it will not avail. This, my Lady Wishfort, must be subscrib'd, or your darling daughter's turn'd a-drift, like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady. Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mira. But that you wou'd not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserv'd you shou'd owe any obligation to me; or else, perhaps, I could advise—

Lady

Lady. O what? what? to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all's that's past; nay, I'll consent to any thing to come, to be deliver'd from this tyranny.

Mira. Ay, Madam; but that's too late, my reward is intercepted. You have dispos'd of her, who only cou'd have made me a compensation for all my services:—but be it as it may, I am resolv'd I'll serve you; you shall not be wrong'd in this savage manner.

Lady. How! dear Mr Mirabell? Can you be so generous at last! but it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady. Ay, ay, any body, any body.

Mira. Foible is one; and a penitent.

S C E N E XI.

[*To them*] *Mrs FAINALL, FOIBLE, MINCING.*

Mrs Mar. O, my shame! these corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To Fain.*

[*Mira. and Lady go to Mrs Fain. and Foib.*

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it; 'tis but *the way of the world*. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foib. Yes, indeed, Madam, I'll take my Bible oath of it.

Minc. And so will I, Mem.

Lady. O Marwood, Marwood; art thou false? My friend deceive me! hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice, to give credit against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Minc. Mercenary, Mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalinas's poems. Mercenary! no; if we wou'd have been mercenary, we shou'd have held our tongues; you wou'd have brib'd us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant thing——Well, what

what are you the better for this? Is this Mr Mirabell's expedient; I'll be put off no longer—You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame: your body shall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs Fain. I despise you, and defy your malice—You have aspers'd me wrongfully—I have prov'd your falsehood—Go, you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together—perish.

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fool'd no longer.

Lady. Ah, Mr Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mira. O, in good time—Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, Madam.

S C E N E XII.

[*To them*] WAITWELL, *with a Box of Writings.*

Lady. O, Sir Rowland—Well, rascal!

Wait. What your Ladyship pleases — I have brought the black box at last, Madam.

Mira. Give it me. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, Sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

Fain. 'Sdeath, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

S C E N E XIII.

[*To them*] PETULANT, WITWOUD.

Pet. How now? what's the matter? whose hand's out!

Wit. Hey day! what, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

Mira. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Wit. Ay, I do; my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mira. You wrong him; his name is fairly written, as shall appear— You do not remember, gentlemen, any thing of what the parchment contained—[*Undoing the box.*

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

G

Mira.

Mira. Very well ; now you shall know.—Mr Fainall, it is now time that you shou'd know, that your Lady, while she was at her disposal, and before you had, by your insinuations, wheedl'd her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune——

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mira. Yes, Sir. I say that this Lady, while a widow, having, it seems, receiv'd some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which, from her own partial opinion and fondness of you, she cou'd never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends, and of sages learn'd in the laws of this land, deliver this same, as her act and deed, to me in trust, and to the uses within mention'd. You may read if you please —[*Holding out the parchment.*] tho', perhaps, what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fain. Very likely, Sir. What's here? damnation! [*Reads.*] *A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell.* Confusion!

Mira. Even so, Sir, 'tis *the Way of the World*, Sir ; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtain'd from your Lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be reveng'd—

[*Offers to run at Mrs Fain.*]

Sir Wil. Hold, Sir ; now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, Sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, Sir ; be sure you shall——Let me pass, oaf.

Mrs Fain. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment : You had better give it vent.

Mrs Mar. Yes, it shall have vent—and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt.

SCENE *the Last.*

Lady WISFORT, MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, Mrs FAINALL, Sir WILFULL, PETULANT, WITWOUD, FORBLE, MINCING, WAITWELL.

Lady. O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs Fain. Thank Mr Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady.

Lady. Well, Mr Mirabell, you have kept your promise—and I must perform mine.—First, I pardon, for your sake, Sir Rowland there and Foible——The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that——

Mira. For that, Madam, give yourself no trouble,—let me have your consent—Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engag'd a volunteer in this action, for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Will. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts—I have set on't—and when I'm set on't, I must do't. And if these two gentlemen wou'd travel too, I think they may be spar'd.

Pet. For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or on.

Wit. I' gad, I understand nothing of the matter—I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing school.

Lady. Well, Sir, take her, and with her, all the joy I can give you.

Milla. Why does the man take me? Wou'd you have me give myself to you over again?

Mira. Ay, and over and over again; [*Kisses her hand*] I wou'd have you as often as possibly I can. Well, heav'n grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir Will. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're marry'd.

Lady. As I am a person I can hold out no longer—I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mira, Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge, his circumstances are such, he must of force comply. In the mean time, Madam, [*To Mrs Fain.*] let me, before these witnesses, restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well manag'd, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warn'd, who mean to wed;

Lest mutual falshood stain the bridal-bed:

For each deceiver to his cost may find,

That marriage-frauds too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

Lady.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

AFTER our Epilogue this crowd dismisses,
 I'm thinking how this play'll be pull'd to pieces.
 But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
 How hard a thing 'twou'd be, to please you all.
 There are some critics so with spleen diseas'd,
 They scarcely come inclining to be pleas'd:
 And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
 Who pleases any one against his will.
 Then, all bad poets we are sure are foes,
 And how their numbers swell'd, the town well knows;
 In shoals, I've mark'd 'em judging in the pit;
 Tho' they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
 But that they have been damn'd for want of wit.
 Since when, they, by their own offences taught,
 Set up for spies on plays, and finding fault.
 Others there are, whose malice we'd prevent;
 Such, who watch plays, with scurrilous intent
 To mark out who by characters are meant:
 And tho' no perfect likeness they can trace;
 Yet each pretends to know the copy'd face.
 These, with false glosses feed their own ill-nature,
 And turn to libel, what was meant a satire.
 May such malicious fops this fortune find,
 To think themselves alone the fools design'd:
 If any are so arrogantly vain,
 To think they singly can support a scene,
 And furnish fool enough to entertain.
 For well the learn'd and the judicious know,
 That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
 As any one abstracted fop to shew.
 For, as when painters form a matchless face,
 They from each fair one catch some diff'rent grace;
 And shining features in one portrait blend,
 To which no single beauty must pretend:
 So poets oft, do in one piece expose
 Whole belles assemblées of coquets and beaus.